

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed February 5, 2003 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 53 to 134 are pending in this application, with claims 53 and 104 being the independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as amended, and in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

It is noted that the file does not contain a Patent Drawing Review by the Patent Office Draftsperson. It is requested that this Review be undertaken and a Review by the Draftsperson be issued in response to this Amendment.

Although in connection with the originally filing the application on July 3, 2001, applicants filed a Proposed Amendment To The Drawings, the Examiner did not indicate in the pending Office Action that the amendment to the drawings were accepted by the Examiner. Applicants request such an indication.

Although an Information Disclosure Statement was filed with the application on July 3, 2001, the Examiner did not indicate in the pending Office Action that the references cited in that IDS were considered by the Examiner. An acknowledgement of such consideration of those references is requested.

In the specification, page 7, the paragraph beginning on line 21 has been amended to add the reference numeral 10 which appears in FIG. 1 but until now not in the specification (except that it was referred to in original claims 17 and 43).

In connection with the preparation of this amendment, many of the claims have been amended to clarify their language. Independent claims 53 and 104 have been amended to clarify that a single supporting element is used to pass the web in a continuous and unbroken manner at least through and from said web treatment device to a next downstream located dryer.

In the Office Action mailed February 5, 2003, claims 53 to 134 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by PCT Patent Application No. WO95/14816 ("Kinnunen").

Kinnunen does not disclose or suggest the use of a single supporting element to pass the web in a continuous and unbroken manner at least through and from said web treatment device to a next downstream located dryer. As shown in all of the Figures of Kinnunen, and Fig. 2 in particular, the web is supported in and through the coating station 9 by a belt 11 and on the subsequent dryers 13, 15/16 by different wires 12, 14. However, in all cases the supporting element at the coating station is different from the one used in the drying equipment. As a result,

there is a gap between support elements when the web exits the coating station and enters the drying equipment. Since the web is wettest and weakest in this point, the risk of a web break is also greatest at this point. The risk is further increased by the fact that there is almost inevitably a small speed difference between the succeeding support elements in order to keep the wet web straight.

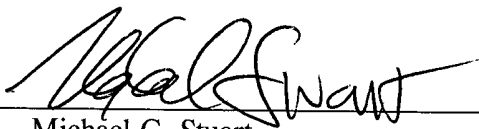
In accordance with the invention as recited in amended independent claims 53 and 104, the above-mentioned problem of web breaks of the wet coated web is solved by using the same supporting element at the coating station through at least the following dryer. Consequently, the web is supported by the same supporting element until it is at least partially dried, after which partial drying the web is much stronger and is less prone to breaks.

Since Kinnunen does not disclose or suggest continuous support of the web through the coating station to at least the first following dryer, the invention recited in amended independent claims 53 and 104 is patentable.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 53 and 104 are patentable. Dependent claims 54 to 103 are patentable for the same reasons that independent claim 53 is patentable; dependent claims 105 to 134 are patentable for the same reasons that independent claim 104 is patentable. Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

COHEN, PONTANI, LIEBERMAN & PAVANE

By 
Michael C. Stuart
Reg. No. 35,698
551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1210
New York, New York 10176
(212) 687-2770

Dated: June 5, 2003